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Archimandrite Leonty
Kiev, 1935

From this day, from this hour,
from this minute, let us strive
to love God above all,
and fulfill His holy will.

THE ORTHODOX WORD

For the Mission of True Orthodox Christianity

Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John (Maximovitch)*, Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

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Just before becoming a novice, the 17 year old future Archbishop Leonty with his friends: Anatole Timofievich—the future physician of Novo-Diveyevo, N.Y., and Ivan—the future Martyr Archimandrite Theodosius, abbot of Kiev Caves Lavra: Kiev, 1925

Archbishop Leonty of Chile

CONFESSOR OF HEARTFELT ORTHODOXY

Despite the apparent fading away of the power of Christianity from our civilization and the noticeable absence of Christian heroes in our midst today, God has not abandoned His persecuted Church in this century and has raised up remarkable Orthodox hierarchs whose heroic stature only increases with time into historic proportions. These heroes, unfortunately, largely escape the attention of most people in the Church.

One such hierarch, who died just ten years ago, almost in oblivion, was Archbishop Leonty of Chile, a fearless propagator of Orthodox Christianity at first in Russia and later outside of it. His historic place is that of a true confessor of the *Christianity of the heart.*

When he died on June 19/July 2, 1971—precisely the fifth anniversary of the repose of his beloved Archbishop John Maximovitch, another outstanding hierarch of the 20th century—Archimandrite Constantine of Jordanville stated:

"There are people whose death fills with light the spot which they have in people's hearts. These people in all their contacts lived by their great heart. What does this mean? It means that for them every person with whom they had contact, even if only for a moment, was a personality of a spiritual nature... One can say that although he has left us, he has come close to us, but not in an earthly way."

Archbishop Leonty was born on August 7, 1907, in a pious Russian family (Filipovich). His distant relative was St. Athanasius of Brest, who suffered a martyr's death at the hands of Roman Catholics in the 17th century.

From early childhood he revealed strong leanings towards the Church and longed to dedicate his life to it. His early education took place in a private school, where his immense musical talent made him a leading boy-soloist in choir. He remembered with great emotion how Emperor Nicholas II visited his town and he saw the unearthly glance of the future Tsar-martyr.

When the Revolution struck Kiev he was already spiritually close to the Kiev Caves Lavra, and he was arrested; but when it was discovered that he came from a "proletariat" family, he was released, and because of his great tenor voice the Soviet government offered him a free education and training for the opera. Thus a great musical career was open before him, but he turned it down in order to serve the Holy Orthodox Church.

And what a sorrowful path he took upon himself!—a path of perpetual deprivation, suffering, and the witnessing of endless personal tragedies during the Soviet years down to the coming of the Germans in 1941. He became a novice at the Lavra at the very time when it was being ruthlessly liquidated. Its monks were tormented and given over to various deprivations, and many were killed.

Out of his sufferings he became a comforter of banished clergymen; he washed the wounds of the hierarchs who had been released and sought refuge in the Lavra. He saved the life of Bishop Parthenius by pulling him out of a gutter and away from a pack of ravenous dogs, and then bringing him to an old woman who was able to nurse him back to life again.

After the final liquidation of the Kiev Caves Lavra, he went to Moscow, where under terrible conditions he was able to go through the theological course in the Academy; the academy sessions at that time were conducted in the private apartments of the professors. Here again he met many bishops and served as a source of contact between them and other clergymen.

Possessing a document declaring him a genuine member of the "proletariat," he took advantage of this opportunity and travelled to many holy places and monasteries in Russia just prior to their liquidation, or shortly afterwards. Thus, he visited Sarov, Diveyevo, many monasteries in the Novgorod area as well as in other regions. He saw the great Rostov vandalized, its relics desecrated, and the clergy humiliated. All that he saw he recorded in his diaries, a portion of which has been preserved in manuscript form.

He witnessed the death pangs of Holy Russia. He heard the voices of holy hierarchs lamenting, holy fools prophesying, and mothers weeping; but all this did not throw him into despair, but on the contrary filled his heart with holy zeal, for he understood that he lived in a new age of martyrs.

Because of his close association with very many church figures, he was able to be a living witness to their confessing stand for Christ, which enabled him later in the free world to testify to their innocent sufferings, inflicted with beastly atrocity by the Soviet government. Much of the work of Father Michael Polsky in his three volumes on the New Martyrs of Russia is based on material sent him by Archbishop Leonty.

Archbishop Leonty himself did not escape severe persecution in the years before the outbreak of the Second World War. He was imprisoned three times and after recalled how, when several bishops and priests had been incarcerated with him under the close supervision of the inhuman guards, they had managed to celebrate the Divine Liturgy while pretending to play cards around a table. The prison conditions in the 1930's were so bad that most inmates were prepared to die in the most inhuman conditions. Some performed the Eucharist on the body of a dying sufferer, recognized as a martyr, since the Divine Liturgy is always performed over the relics of martyrs.

Somehow Vladika managed to get out of prison and for some time was forced to hide in an attic, suspended in a sack-like hammock so as not to reveal his presence by footsteps; the only time he could exercise was in the dead of night when the tenants below were asleep. Such living conditions of the persecuted Christians in the USSR seem incredible to us in the free world only because of the lukewarmness of our own Orthodox faith. But if we would live by the Orthodox calendar, where every day there are Scripture readings and the commemoration of saints and martyrs, we would understand.

When the Germans arrived in Western Russia in 1941, freedom of religion was restored and a tremendous field of activity opened for the surviving clergy. At this time Archimandrite Leonty found himself in Belo-Russia, where he was soon consecrated bishop in the renowned Pochaev Lavra, which up to then had been Polish territory and so had escaped destruction at Soviet hands. Between 1941, when he was consecrated, and November of 1943, when he left for the West, he was bishop of Zhitomir and consecrated over 300 priests and several bishops, and opened huundreds of churches. His enthusiasm and deeply-felt attitude towards people made him an outstanding archpastor who, when celebrating the Divine services, was transported into another world. His high tenor voice seemed to soar above earthly tumult, but his keen mind was never detached from human reality. He continued his church activity in the same spirit in Austria and Western Germany after the war, when he was appointed bishop of Paraguay and Chile in South America (Argentina became part of his diocese just before his death).

In Chile he founded a monastic community, one of whose members was the later Bishop Savva of Edmonton, Canada. Vladika brought him into his monastic brotherhood, inspired him towards the monastic ideal, tonsured him and placed him as an independent pastor who later, as a zealous bishop, started a movement of spiritual renewal in the Russian Church and

is now known as the chronicler of the miraculous life of Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch.

During his travels in the free world Archbishop Leonty made a study of the sorrowful state of his Orthodox brethren in Greece, who were languishing under the modernistic influences on Orthodox life, symbolized by the new papal calendar which had been forced upon them in the 1920's. In his martyric zeal he went to Greece and consecrated bishops for the believers who followed the Old Calendar, thus establishing a close contact between them and the Russian Church Abroad.

Soon he was made an archbishop and founded the Dormition Convent from nuns he brought from the Holy Land; this convent now operates an orphanage and a parish school in the name of St. John of Kronstadt. These nuns, headed by the righteous Abbess Alexia, were originally blessed in their ascetic life by the Optina Elder Nektary, now a glorified saint, whose traditions they firmly adhered to in the monastic training of novices.

Archbishop Leonty was a flaming defender of truth and rose fearlessly in all his spiritual stature to put down any manifestation of unrighteousness. From his first acquaintance with Archbishop John Maximovitch in Paris, he immediately recognized in him a living saint, just like the ones he had seen and lived with in much-suffering Russia. With all his loving heart he bowed down before the spiritual authority of Blessed John and supported him whenever he was slandered by those who lacked his experience of living contact with God's genuine saints. When these slanders took a serious form and Archbishop John was put on trial in San Francisco in the 1960's (accused of covering up dishonesty in church finances), Archbishop Leonty immediately flew to defend him and sat with him, together with Bishops Nektary and Savva, on the bench of the accused. Archbishop John, of course, was proven innocent, and the monument of his victory today is the magnificent cathedral, "The Joy of All Who Sorrow", in San Francisco, under which Blessed John's own remains lie.

When Archbishop Leonty learned of the sudden death of Archbishop John, he, together with another righteous and persecuted hierarch, Archbishop Averky of Jordanville, drove all the way across the United States to be at his funeral. There he shed bitter tears over the body of Archbishop John, whom he loved so much that his wish was to be closer to his grave, perhaps as Archbishop of San Francisco. God, however, did not grant this, and exactly on the fifth anniversary of Archbishop John's death, after having prayed for the repose of his soul in his own cathedral in Buenos Aires, he gave his soul over to God, joining his beloved Abba.

ARCHBISHOP LEONTY

The sudden death of Archbishop Leonty, who had been recovering from a heart ailment, was a great sorrow for his flock. They buried him in the cemetery which he himself had established. The sick, dying child of a local Chilean woman was placed on his grave and was miraculously healed. There were other caes of similar heavenly intervention through the prayers of Archbishop Leonty. But the most touching account of him comes from a venerator of his memory, who was granted a series of visions of him, a portion of which we offer here:

"This vision took place exactly on the day of the decision of the Council of Bishops in 1971 concerning the beginning of preparations for the canonization of the New Martyrs of Russia. It was on a Saturday. During a light sleep my spiritual father (who is still alive in Buenos Aires) appeared to me in spirit, confessed me, and released my sins.

"At the beginning of this dream I saw myself in a huge temple not built by human hands. On the right kliros for quite a distance was a huge crowd of people dressed in white; I could not make out their faces. Around me there was a quiet, heart-rending singing, although I couldn't see anyone there. Then both side doors of the altar swung open and from them began to come out holy hierarchs and monks, fully vested in gentle blue vestments; among them I could recognize only St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia. From the door near me, among the passing bishops, Vladika Leonty passed by and stopped near me, saying: 'You, brother Basil, were called and you *did* come. You know we have a great celebration here today!' 'What kind of celebration, Vladika?' I asked. And he continued: 'The heavenly glorification of the Tsar-martyr!' And having bowed to me slightly, he continued on his way to the kethedra (in the center of the church).

"Finally, the holy doors of the altar opened, and out of them came the Tsar-martyr, looking just as he appears on his official portraits during the first years of his reign—that is, very young. He was dressed in the Tsar's royal mantle, as during his coronation, and he wore the emperor's crown on his head. In his hands he held a large cross, and on his pale face I noticed a slight wound, either from a bullet or some blow. He passed by me at an even pace, descended the step of the ambo, and went into the center of the church. As he neared the kathedra the singing increased in volume, and when his foot touched the step of the kathedra it became so loud that it seemed taht a whole world of people had gathered and were singing with one breath.

"Here I came to my senses on my bed, immensely shaken, with a little wound on my right eye. It was about four o'clock in the morning. For a

long time I was under the deep impression of what I had experienced."

The same man saw Archbishop Leonty in a dream just before the fortieth day after his repose: "On the 37th day after the repose of Archbishop Leonty I had a vision in a dream. I saw him in church vestments and a mitre heading a solemn pontifical church service. When he saw me he quickly got up and hastened to greet me. He embraced and kissed me and said, 'How happy I am to see you, brother Basil. I am now quite well. I feel no pain, and here I am very happy. In a few days I will receive new quarters with all comforts, as they say on earth; it has already been promised me.'

"A month after this I saw another dream, which indicated to me that he had been granted a heavenly abode. I heard beautiful music and saw millions of sparkling stars, and I was already on a boat which was to bring me to the other shore where he was. This is what God prepared for his faithful servant of the catacomb hierarchy, and later of our Church Outside of Russia." (*Orthodox Life*, 1971, December, pp. 18-20.)

Through the prayers of the righteous Archbishop Leonty, confessor of the Orthodoxy of the heart, may our Lord have mercy on all of us. Amen.

F. H.

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THE LIFE OF OUR HOLY FATHER

Gregory the Wonderworker

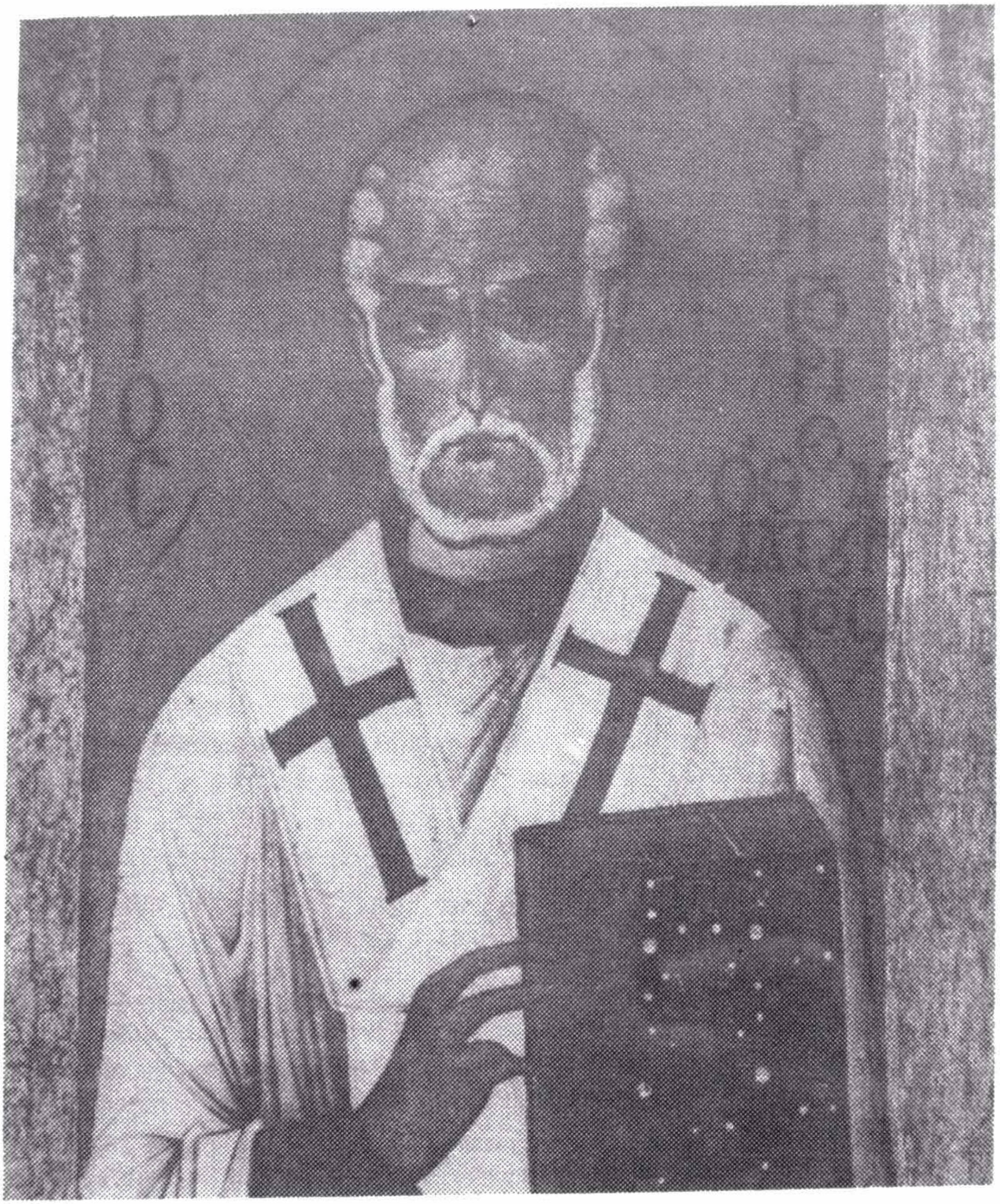
Bishop of Neo-Caesarea

November 17

SAINT GREGORY came from the glorious and great city of Neo-Caesarea* and was born of pagan parents. When still a child he lost them. Occupying himself with the study of Greek wisdom,** he began also to understand the more perfect wisdom which consists in the knowledge of the One True God: from the creation he recognized the Creator and strove to please Him by meekness and a chaste life.

*** Neo-Caesarea is the present Niksar, renowned for its beauty. Built relatively late, it is the capital of Pontus Polemoniacus in the north of Asia Minor on the river Likos. It was especially famous because of the church council which occurred there after the death of Saint Gregory, in 315 A.D.**

**** By Greek wisdom here is to be understood pagan learning, pagan education. The father of Saint Gregory of Neo-Caesarea was a pagan and raised his son in paganism. His father prepared him to be a lawyer, and therefore Saint Gregory (who in the world was called Theodore) studied well the laws and the language of the laws at that time, Latin, and decided finally to go to Rome so as to become more acquainted with Roman Law. But the providence of God arranged his life otherwise: together with his brother he had to accompany his sister to Caesarea and from there he later set out to study law in Beirut, and from there he set out for Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, which at that time was renowned for its learning, and at that time especially for philosophy and medicine. Together with pagan learning, there was also a flourishing Christian theological edu-**



ST GREGORY THE WONDERWORKER

12th Century Byzantine Icon

When he became acquainted with the teaching of the holy Gospels, he immediately became a follower of it and, having received baptism, strove to live according to the commandments of Christ in purity and unacquisitiveness. He renounced all the vanity of the world, wealth, pride, glory, and temporal pleasures. Having renounced the pleasing of the flesh, Gregory remained in great continence, mortifying his will, and he guarded the purity of his virginity so strictly that for the course of his whole life, from his mother's womb to his blessed repose, he did not know fleshly sin and preserved himself from defilement so as to be pleasing to the Only Pure and Sinless One, Christ God, born of the immaculate Virgin. Having given himself over to God from youth, with His help he advanced from strength to strength, from virtue to virtue, and he went through the path of life without vice; for this he gained the love of God and of good people, while the evil hated him.

When, being still a youth, he was studying philosophy and the healing art in Alexandria together with many other youths who had come there from all lands, his chaste and immaculate life aroused the hatred of his fellow students. Being unchaste and enslaved by passions, they lived uncleanly, frequenting the houses of prostitution, as was the custom among the pagan youths. But Saint Gregory, as a Christian youth, avoided this ruinous path, fled from impurity, and hated iniquity; like a lily in the midst of thorns,** so in the midst of the unclean he shone forth through his purity.

Many knew of his pure and immaculate life, and for this many worthy philosophers and citizens greatly respected and praised him. But his fellow students, being unable to look upon the youth, who by his continence and purity surpassed not only other youths, but even elders, devised a way to spread an evil tale among men, stating that he lived just as uncleanly as the others, thereby hoping to darken the good name which

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cation. The famous catechetical school of Alexandria, which contained in its ranks a multitude of the most renowned teachers of that age, attracted within its walls large numbers of students, not only Christians but also pagans.

****The white lily is a beautiful flower of a bulbous plant. The Lord Himself praises the beauty of the lily and places it above all the splendid garments of Solomon (see Matthew 6:28-29, Luke 12:27). Therefore in the Holy Scripture the lily very often serves as an image of high moral perfection. Here the virtuous life of the young Gregory is compared to a splendid lily growing in the midst of thorns, which serve in the Scripture as an image of implety and sin.**

he justly enjoyed among men. They instructed a certain harlot to slander and spread a false rumor against the youth who was innocent and pure in heart.

Once, when the Saint in the sight of all was conversing with worthy philosophers and the leading teachers, the harlot, being instructed by the fellow students of the Saint, came up to him and shamelessly asked of him the proper payment for the fleshly sin which he had supposedly committed with her. Everyone heard this and was astonished. Some were scandalized, believing it to be true; but others, knowing the purity and immaculateness of Gregory, gave no credence to the words of this shameless harlot and chased her away. But she, crying out loudly, kept asking the Saint to give her the payment for the fornication which he had committed. Oh, how shameful it was for St. Gregory to hear such shameless and unjust reproaches from this woman who was an open sinner, and in the presence of so many honorable people! Like a pure maiden, he blushed; however, being meek and without malice, he did not say anything sharp to the harlot, did not show any anger at all, did not begin to justify himself or present witnesses of his innocence, but he meekly said to one of his friends: "Quickly give her the payment, as much as she demands, so that she will depart from us without wearying us further."

The friend instantly gave her as much as she desired, redeeming the innocent Gregory from shame. But God, the faithful Witness in the heavens, revealed this injustice in the following manner: He allowed an unclean spirit to approach the shameless and deceiving harlot, and when she took in her hands the unjust payment, immediately she also received a cruel punishment: for the demon fell upon her and began to torture her before everyone. The harlot fell to the ground, cried out with a frightful voice, trembled in her whole body, gnashed her teeth, and became numb, foaming at the mouth, so that all standing by were filled with great fear and terror, seeing such a speedy and cruel recompense for the innocent youth. And the demon did not cease tormenting her until the Saint performed fervent prayer for her to God and thereby banished the demon from her. This served as the beginning of the miracles of the young Gregory, by whose virtues even elders were astonished.

Gregory had a friend of good moral life and sound reason, Firmian by name, a native of Cappadocia. Having revealed to him the deepest thought of his heart – to leave everything and serve the one God – Gre-

gory found that Firmian also had the same idea and desired to go on the same path. After mutual counsel, both of them abandoned worldly philosophy, abandoned the pagan schools, and began to study Christian wisdom and the mysteries of the Divine Scripture.

At that time among the teachers of the Church of Christ the renowned Origen was at the peak of his fame.* Coming to him, together

* Origen was the renowned Christian teacher of the Church of Alexandria; he died in 254. A miracle of his age in the immensity of his mind and the depth of his learning, at this time he was an outstanding catechist of the Alexandrian catechetical school. He raised up many remarkable fathers and teachers of the church, and some of them were obliged to him for their conversion from paganism to the Christian faith. Origen wished to harmonize knowledge and philosophy with the Christian faith. Especially remarkable are his works in the study of Sacred Scripture, in the interpretation of it, and especially in the restoration and cleansing of the authentic text, and likewise his works dedicated to the defence of Christianity against heretics and the enemies of Christianity. In general, he did much not only for his own time but also for the times to come, and all the great teachers of the Church in the 4th century had the greatest respect for Origen and made significant use of his works. Origen attracted to the catechetical school a great number of listeners, among whom were a multitude of pagan youths who were zealously seeking higher education. Saint Gregory became acquainted with him in Alexandria and became his disciple. Origen, in the words of Gregory himself, made him first seek the seeds of truth which were scattered in the systems of the philosophers and awoke in him a love for the truth; then he began to set forth the principle of Christian faith and explained the Holy Scripture. After remaining eight years with Origen, Gregory received holy baptism from him and, having thanked his instructor with a public speech, he returned to his homeland with sorrow over being separated from him. Gregory wrote thus of his teacher: "I think that he spoke not otherwise than by the inspiration of the Spirit of God; in order to be a prophet and explain a prophet, a prophet's power is required. And no one can understand a prophet unless the Spirit of God Himself communicates the understanding of His words. This man received from God the greatest gift: to be a translator of the word of God to men, to understand the word of God as God Himself used it, and to explain it to men in a way they can understand."

Unfortunately, in his works Origen sometimes allowed arbitrary ideas which are not shared by the Church, although he did express them not as the positive teaching of the Church but as his personal suppositions. Thus, he did not teach precisely about the relationship of the Persons of the Holy Trinity; he said that the devil, if he wished, could be saved; that the souls of men were created before the creation of the visible world; etc. Fervent followers of Origen, of whom there were very many within Alexandria and in Palestine, often developed those ideas to an extreme; such followers were called Origenists and their opinion is called the Origenist heresy (which was condemned at the fifth Ecumenical Council in 553).

with his friend Firmian, Saint Gregory began to study with him and, having remained with him quite some time, he returned to his homeland, Neo-Caesarea.

The citizens of Neo-Caesarea and all who knew him, seeing his great wisdom, desired that he should be in honor among the citizens and should accept the obligations of judge and chief of the city. But Gregory, fleeing pride, the empty glory of men, and the many nets with which the enemy entangles the world, left his native city and, settling in the desert, lived in profound solitude for God alone, in such struggles and labors as are known alone to the One Who *has created the heart in solitude and understands all our works* (Ps. 32:15).

While Saint Gregory was staying in the desert and was exercising himself in the thought of God, blessed Fedim, bishop of the Cappadocian city of Amasea,* found out about him and wished to bring him out of the desert for the service of the Church of Christ, to make him a bishop and teacher; for he foresaw in him the grace of God and the fact that he would be a great pillar of the Church and a support of faith. Saint Gregory likewise had the gift of clairvoyance, and when he found out that the bishop wished to take him from the desert for the service of the Church, he hid from him, considering himself unworthy of this rank. He went in the desert from place to place so as not to be found. Blessed Fedim diligently sought him out and entreated him to come out of the desert, but being unable to separate the desert-lover from his desert and to bring him to Amasea for ordination, he did something which might seem strange and unusual.

Being moved by the Spirit of God, and inflamed by zeal for the holy Church, he was not hindered by the fact that Gregory had not come to him and that between them there lay a large distance (from the city of Amasea to the desert in which Gregory was living, it was three days' journey) ; Bishop Fedim was not hindered by the distance between them, and he ordained Gregory, who was far away, as bishop of the church of Neo-Caesarea. Lifting up his gaze to God, he said: "O All-knowing and Almighty God, look down this hour upon me and upon Gregory, and make effective this ordination by Thy grace."

*** Amasea is a strongly fortified, important city in the northern part of Asia Minor on the shore of the Black Sea.**

Regarding this act we have the testimony of Saint Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote the Life of this Saint;* there is also confirmation of it in the service to the Saint, which states the following: "Fedim, standing before God, inflamed with zeal, anointed thee when thou wast not present, O Father, having placed his pious hope in God Who knows all things, and having trusted in thy honorable life. O divinely-speaking Gregory" (Canticle Five of the Canon at Matins).

Thus did the blessed Fedim perform upon Gregory an unusual ordination, and Saint Gregory, even against his desire, submitted to accepting governance of the church: for could he oppose the will of the Lord? But before everything else he hastened to prayer, entreating help from above for such a work.

At that time there began to spread the heresy of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata.* St. Gregory was in perplexity regarding it and prayed ardently to God and to the Mother of God to reveal to him the true faith. One night while he was praying for this especially ardently, the Most Pure Virgin Mary appeared to him, radiant as the sun, with John the Theologian, who was clothed in a bishop's garments. Pointing to Gregory with her hand, the Most Pure One ordered John the Theologian to teach him how the mystery of the Holy Trinity ought to be believed.

By the command of the Mother of God, in a short period of time St. Gregory was instructed by Saint John the Theologian in the great mys-

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*** Saint Gregory the wonderworker received the highest authority in the church hierarchy, according to the testimony of the same Gregory of Nyssa, only after there had been performed on him all the lawful sacred rites, and after having asked St. Fedim, who had chosen him to the episcopal see, a short time to gain precise knowledge of the mysteries of the faith.**

**** Sabellius and Paul of Samosata taught incorrectly about the mystery of the most Holy Trinity. The former affirmed that God is one person: as Father He is in heaven, as Son on Earth, as Holy Spirit in creatures. According to the teaching of Sabellius these are only the known forms in which God is manifest to men: in the Old Testament as giver of the law He is manifest as Father; in the New as Saviour He is manifest as Son; and He continues to be manifest as the Spirit who sanctifies men. Paul of Samosata (named after his place of birth), bishop of Antioch, taught incorrectly that the Son and the Holy Spirit are in God the Father just as mind and power (reason and spirit) are in man. Acknowledging Christ to be a simple man filled with the Holy Spirit and Divine wisdom, Paul forbade the singing in the church of Antioch of hymns in honor of Jesus Christ as God, as well as baptizing in His name. The followers of this heresy were called Patripassians, since, not distinguishing the Persons of the Divinity, they ascribed incarnation and suffering to God the Father.**

teries of God and drew from the inexhaustible depth of the wisdom of Divine knowledge.

The words of the revelation spoken by John the Theologian were the following:

"There is One God, the Father of the Living Word, His Hypostatic Wisdom and Power and Eternal Image: perfect Begetter of the Perfect, Father of the Only-begotten Son. There is One Lord, Sole of the Sole, God of God, Image and Likeness of Deity, effective Word, Wisdom that embraces the constitution of all things, and creative Power of the whole creation, True Son of True Father, Invisible, Incorruptible, Immortal, and Ever-existing Son of the Invisible, Incorruptible and Ever-existing Father. And there is One Holy Spirit, having His Being from the Father, and being manifest to men through the Son, Perfect Image of the Perfect Son, Life, the Cause of everything living, Holy Fount, Sanctity that gives sanctification, in Whom God the Father reveals Himself, Who is above all and in all, and God the Son (reveals Himself), Who is through all. There is a perfect Trinity, in glory and eternity and sovereignty, neither divided nor estranged. Wherefore there is nothing either created or in servitude in the Trinity, nor anything brought from without, as if previously non-existent and subsequently introduced. And thus neither was the Son ever lacking before the Father, nor the Holy Spirit before the Son; but without variation and without change, the same Trinity abides forever."

After this vision Saint Gregory recorded with his own hand the words spoken to him by Saint John the Theologian, and this record was preserved in the church of Neo-Caesarea for the course of many years.*

*** Saint Gregory of Nyssa, having related the miraculous origin of this Symbol of faith, adds: "If anyone wishes to be assured of this, let him hear the church in which he preached and in which up to now the original version is preserved, written by the blessed hand." The blessed Macrina, the grandmother of Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, who heard the wonderworker himself, brought his Symbol to Cappadocia and taught it to her grandchildren, including Basil the Great. Gregory the Theologian was likewise guided by this Symbol. Rufinus placed it in his translation of the church history of Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553) approved it. The Symbol of Gregory the wonderworker is one of the most precious memorials of antiquity. It is not long, but it includes a precise teaching on the Three Persons of the Trinity, on their oneness of essence, their personal attributes and activities in relation to man; and therefore it is entirely worthy of careful study.**

After this, Saint Gregory set off for Neo-Caesarea. At that time the whole of Neo-Caesarea was in the darkness of idol worship; there were a great multitude of idols and temples of idols in this city. Every day many sacrifices were offered to the idols, so that the entire air was filled with the stench coming from the animals that were slaughtered and burned in sacrifice, and only seventeen men in all were believers in such a large city.

When St. Gregory was going to Neo-Caesarea, on the way he happened to pass by a certain temple of the idols. It was evening and a heavy rain had started. Out of necessity the Saint and his companions had to enter this temple of the idols, in which dwelt demons who appeared to their sorcerers and conversed with them. Spending the night there, Saint Gregory performed his usual hymns and prayers of Nocturns and Matins and signed with the sign of the Cross the air which had been defiled by demonic sacrifices. Frightened at the sign of the Cross and the holy prayers of Gregory, the demons left their temple and the idols and vanished.

In the morning Saint Gregory with his friends set out farther on their journey, and the sorcerer of the idols entered the temple, according to his custom, desiring to offer sacrifice to the demons; but he did not find the demons, for they had fled from there. The demons did not appear to him even when he began to offer sacrifice, as previously they had usually appeared; and the sorcerer was in perplexity as to the reason why his gods had left their temple. He fervently entreated them to return to their place, but they cried out from afar: "We cannot enter there where in the past night the stranger stayed who was walking from the desert to Neo-Caesarea."

The sorcerer, hearing this, hastened after Gregory, overtook him, stopped him, and with anger began to cry out against him, reproaching him because he, being a Christian, had dared to enter the temple of their gods, and because the gods for his sake had come to hate this place and had departed. He threatened him with the imperial judgment, intending immediately to conduct him by force to the torturers. Saint Gregory, with meek and wise words calming the anger of the sorcerer, finally said: "My God is so Almighty that He even commands the demons, and He has given me such power over them that they obey me even against their will."

The sorcerer, hearing this, calmed his anger and entreated the Saint to command the pagan gods to return to their temple. The Saint, having torn a small leaf out of his little book, wrote on it the following words: "Gregory to satan: Enter." And he gave this leaf to the sorcerer, commanding him to place it on the altar of his defiled gods. And immediately the demons returned to the temple and conversed with the sorcerer as before. The sorcerer was terrified, being astonished at the divine power of Saint Gregory that enabled him to command the demons by a word and they obeyed him. He hastened again after him and overtook him when he still had not reached the city, and he asked him from where he had such power that the pagan gods feared him and obeyed his commands. Saint Gregory, seeing that the heart of the sorcerer was receptive to faith, began to instruct him about the One True God Who had created everything by His word, and he transmitted to him the mystery of holy faith.

While they were thus travelling and conversing, the sorcerer began to entreat Saint Gregory to perform some miracle as a visible confirmation of his faith. And behold, they saw an immense rock which, as it seemed, no power could move from its place. But Gregory in the name of Christ commanded it to move from its place, and the rock moved and went to the place where the sorcerer wanted it. Terror took possession of the sorcerer at the sight of this most glorious miracle, and he confessed: "One is the true and All-powerful God preached by Gregory, and there is no other besides Him." And immediately he believed in Him and spread the news of this event everywhere so quickly that in Neo-Caesarea the people found out about the miracles of Gregory and about his authority over the demons before Gregory himself even arrived there.*

*** "After this miracle," says Saint Gregory of Nyssa, "this man, having immediately believed the word of Gregory, left his homeland, his house, his wife and children, his friends, his sorcery, and his property, and in place of everything that belonged to him preferred his fellowship with this great man and participation in his labors and in his divine love of wisdom and learning. In the face of this let all the artificial discoveries of the writers of fabulous deeds be silent – they who by their eloquence exaggerate the dimensions of wondrous deeds – for not such is the miracle related above, that the power of eloquence speaking of it might make it greater or less than it is in reality. Who can make this miracle greater by saying something more than has been said? A rock is cast away from other rocks; a rock becomes a preacher of divine faith and a guide of unbelievers to salvation, not by any kind of voice, not preaching divine power by words, but by virtue of what it did, showing that the One proclaimed by Gregory is God to**

The whole city knew about his coming, and a multitude of people went out to meet him, desiring to see him, since they had heard that by a word he had moved a great rock to a different place and that he commanded their gods and they obeyed him.

Entering for the first time into the great city under circumstances so extraordinary for him, Saint Gregory was not astonished at such a multitude of people who had gathered for his sake, but walking as if in the desert, he looked only at himself and at the road, paying no attention to those who had gathered around him. And this itself seemed to the people to be a higher and more marvelous miracle than the one performed by the Saint on the rock.

Gregory entered the city pressed on all sides by those accompanying him, as if the whole city were already honoring his episcopacy. But freeing himself from every burden of life, the Saint paid no attention to this. When he entered the city, there was not even a house, whether a church house or a private house, for him to rest in, and his companions were disturbed and upset as to where they would lodge and find a roof for themselves. But their teacher, the divinely-wise Gregory, calmed them and at the same time, as if reproaching their faintheartedness, said: "How is it that you, who seem to be without the protection of God, are disturbed as to where you are to give repose to your bodies? Is God really such a small house for you, even though in Him we live and move and have our being? Or is the roof of heaven too confining for you, that you are seeking some other dwelling besides it? Let your concern be only for the one house that is the property of everyone, the house that is erected by virtues and ascends to the heights. For it alone should you be concerned, lest this dwelling be in disorder among you."

When Saint Gregory was instructing his companions in this way, a certain renowned and wealthy citizen who was present, whose name was Musonius, seeing that many people had one and the same desire and concern – how to receive this great man into their own houses – forestalling the others, he turned to Gregory with the entreaty to stay with him and to honor his house by his entrance into it. Others entreated the Saint to do the same, but he, fulfilling the request of the first man, stayed in the house of Musonius.

Whom the whole creation is subjected and submits – not only the sensual, living, animate creation, but even all the rest of the creation slavishly serves Him as if not deprived of feeling."

When Gregory entered Neo-Caesarea he found there only seventeen believers; the whole city worshipped the soulless idols and served the demons. Then Gregory began to entreat God in the secret place of his heart, that He might look down upon His creation and might enlighten such a multitude of the erring and perishing and convert them to the path of salvation. Remaining in the house of Musonius, Gregory began to teach the unbelieving the knowledge of the true God. Those who listened to his words were at first a small number, but before the day had finished and the sun had set, so many had come together to the first gathering that there was already a large crowd of people.

The aid of God was so much with him that he did not spend a single day without acquiring human souls for the Church of Christ. A multitude of men, with their wives and children, gathered around St. Gregory in the house of Musonius to listen to his teaching and to see the miraculous healings which occurred from him;* for he banished evil spirits from men, healed every kind of affliction, and day by day believers were joined to the Church and their numbers multiplied.

In a short time, through the means of those who had come to believe in the Lord, Gregory built a marvelous church; people gave to the Saint for the building of the church everything they had, and they opened their treasuries so that he might take as much as needed for the adornment of the house of the Lord, for the feeding of orphans and the serving of the sick. Thus the word of God grew in Neo-Caesarea, the holy faith was spread, the polytheism of the idols was destroyed and their vile temples became desolate, the idols were broken, and the name of the One Almighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was magnified and glorified in Neo-Caesarea, and by the power of God through Saint Gregory there were performed most wondrous and frightful miracles.

The following miraculous vision, according to the testimony of Saint Gregory of Nyssa, especially aided the establishment of the Church of Christ in Neo-Caesarea and increased there the number of the believers.

In the city, in accordance with an ancient custom, a pagan feast was celebrated for all the people in honor of a certain local deity. Al-

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*** The multitude of the miracles performed by Saint Gregory of Neo-Caesarea soon gained for him the title of wonderworker and second Moses, as Saint Gregory of Nyssa testifies of him in his homily on the life of Saint Gregory the wonderworker.**

most the whole province came for this feast, since the inhabitants of the villages celebrated together with the city. During the time of the feast the theater was overflowing with spectators and everyone was striving to get closer to the stage, desiring to see and hear better, and from this there arose a loud sound and disturbance, as a consequence of which there was a common cry among the people: everyone cried out to the deity they revered that it might give them more room. "Zeus," the unbelievers cried out, "give us more room." Hearing this senseless prayer, Saint Gregory sent one of his servers to say that soon they would be given more room even than they were asking for. These words turned out to be a sad sentence: immediately after this feast of the whole people, a deadly plague spread in the city, lamentation was mixed with the joyous songs, so that their joy was turned into woe and misfortune, and in place of the sounds of trumpets and applause the city resounded with ceaseless songs of mourning. The disease which appeared in the city spread more quickly than one might expect, laying waste houses like fire, so that the churches were filled with those infected by the plague, fleeing there in hope of healing. Around the fountains, springs, and wells there were crowds of those tormented by thirst in this helpless disease, but water was powerless to quench their sickening fever. Many went themselves to the cemeteries, since there were not enough of those left among the living to bury the dead. This misfurtune struck people unexpectedly; but as it were a certain specter drew near at first to the house where the plague was to appear, and only then did death come.

After it became clear to everyone in this fashion what was the cause of the disease, namely that the demon whom they had invoked had maliciously fulfilled their entreaty, having furnished the city by means of the disease this unfortunate "room" - all appealed to Saint Gregory, entreating him to stop the spread of the disease by the power of the God Whom he confessed, Whom alone they now confessed as true God reigning over everyone. And as soon as that specter appeared, declaring beforehand the appearance of the plague in the house, there seemed to those subjected to this misfortune only one means of salvation: that the Saint would enter that house and by his prayer drive away the disease which had penetrated into the house.

When the news of this had been very swiftly spread from those who were among the first to be saved from the plague in this way, everything to which men had previously hastened in their senselessness was aban-

doned: oracles, purifications, visits to the temples of the idols – because everybody turned their gaze to the great hierarch and everyone strove to bring him to their house to save their family. The reward for this from those who were saved was the salvation of their souls, for when his piety was witnessed by such an experience, those who had come to know in very fact the power of faith had no cause to delay in receiving the Mystery of Christ. And to the degree that, while they were healthy, they had been dissatisfied in their thoughts concerning the reception of the Mystery, to the same degree were they now confirmed in faith through their bodily illness. When in this way the error of idol worship was exposed, everyone turned to the name of Christ, some being drawn to the truth by the disease which had overtaken them, and others hastening to faith in Christ as to a treatment preserving them against the plague.*

After this a universal reverence for Saint Gregory became yet more firmly established in Neo-Caesarea. The inhabitants both of the city itself and of the surrounding areas, being struck by the Apostolic miracles of the Saint, believed that everything he said and did was spoken and done by Divine power. Therefore, in disputes over worldly matters also, people knew no tribunal higher than him, but every dispute and all difficult and complicated matters were resolved by his advice. Thus, through the grace-giving influence of Saint Gregory, justice and peace came to dwell in the city and no evil violated the mutual harmony.

Two brothers, having received much property after the death of their father as an inheritance, divided it peacefully between themselves. But they had one large lake over which they argued greatly, for both of them wished to have it entirely to themselves. As a judge for themselves they chose the wonderworker Gregory. Coming to them at the lake, he made many efforts to reconcile them, but he had no success. Both brothers were stubborn and did not wish to yield to each other their part in the lake. After many disputes and arguments they finally wished to begin fighting each other, for both of them had many partisans, and the Saint could hardly talk them out of a literal battle on that day.

*** The account of this miracle is set forth here in abbreviated form, based on the account of Saint Gregory of Nyssa in his homily on the life of Saint Gregory the wonderworker.**

Evening came and all went to their homes, putting off the battle until the morning. The Saint stayed at the lake alone and, spending the whole night in prayer, he commanded the lake in the name of the Lord to become entirely dry, so that not even a single drop of water might remain in it, nor even the slightest moisture, and that the earth might become suitable for plowing and sowing.

And it happened according to the word of the Saint: suddenly, no one knows where, the waters were hidden and the earth became dry. In the morning both brothers came to the lake with a multitude of armed men in order to take possession of the lake by means of battle, but they did not find a single drop of water at the place where the lake had been. The earth seemed as dry and as covered with plants as if there had never been water there. Struck by this miracle, the brothers despite themselves were reconciled to each other, and all the people glorified God. Such was the righteous judgment performed by the wonderworker: where there could be no peace between brethren and a battle was all ready to break out, there he annihilated the very cause of the battle, having dried up the watery lake so that the love of the brethren would not dry up.

In that land there was a river called Likos.* During the spring it overflowed its banks and, spreading far and wide, inundated the nearby villages, fields, gardens, and orchards, causing ruin to the sowings and a great loss to men. The people who lived on the banks of that river, hearing about Saint Gregory the wonderworker of Neo-Caesarea and that he had power over the waters (for he had commanded a great lake and it had gone dry), all gathered from small to great and, coming to the Saint, fell down to his feet, entreating him to have mercy upon them and to stop the rising of the river; for at that time this river had become extraordinarily full of water, and was inundating many villages. The Saint said to them: "God Himself has placed a limit to the rivers, and they cannot flow otherwise than as God has commanded them."

But with yet greater fervor they entreated the Saint. Seeing their grief, the Saint arose and went with them to that river, and coming to the banks within which the river flowed when it was not flooded, he planted there his staff and said: "My Christ commands you, river, not to over-

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*** "Likos" (a Greek word meaning "wolf"): A river in Pontus, in the north of Asia Minor, which flows from the mountains of Armenia; it received its name for its swift and untamed nature and for the harm which it caused to the nearby inhabitants.**

flow your boundaries and not to spread your waters farther, but to flow in an orderly manner within these banks of yours."

Immediately the staff which had been planted by the Saint grew into a great oak tree, and the waters gathered into their course between the banks, and from that time the river never overflowed its banks, but when the waters rose and drew near to the oak, immediately they turned back and did not inundate the labors of men.*

The holy wonderworker desired to build a church in a certain beautiful place near a mountain. When he began to lay the foundation, the place seemed to be too small, and it was impossible to enlarge it because the moutnain was in the way. Then the Saint stood at prayer, and having prayed, he commanded the mountain in the name of Jesus Christ to move and depart from its place, as far as was necessary for the area of the church; and the mountain immediately trembled and moved away, making a space sufficient for the foundation of a large church. Such was the faith of this pleaser of God that it even moved mountains! Many unbelievers, seeing this miracle, were converted to the Lord and accepted baptism from the Saint. His fame spread everywhere by reason of the great miracles manifested by him through the power of God with which he was filled.

The rumor of such miracles spread throughout the whole land, and everyone believed that they occurred by the power of faith in Christ and they desired to be communicants of this faith, which was confirmed by

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*** Saint Gregory of Nyssa says: "For the river this tree served as the limit of its course, but for the inhabitants of that place it serves as a spectacle and object of historical account; for when that river, being filled to overflowing with rain and streams, flows with swift current and frightful noise, it strikes with the tip of its waves against the trunk of this tree and again rises up and directs its current of waters into the center (of its channel), and as if fearing to touch this tree, it flows around this place with a course that curves. Such is the power of the great Gregory, or rather of God Who performed this miracle through him! For the nature of the elements, as if some kind of involuntary agent, is manifest as changing in accordance with the order it receives, so that the lake is changed to dry land, and the place covered with water becomes a place of habitation, because the staff made it harmless for the inhabitants. The name of this tree even until now is 'Staff,' and this whole time it has been preserved by the local inhabitants in memory of the grace and power of Gregory."**

these miracles. Therefore from a nearby town by the name of Comana* there came to the Saint an emissary with the request to approve a church for them and ordain for them a worthy bishop. Saint Gregory fulfilled their petition and spent several days with them, confirming them in faith and piety. And when the time came to choose a bishop, the Saint, to the astonishment of everyone, indicated as the one worthy of this high honor, a certain pious and God-pleasing man, Alexander by name, who previously had been a simple charcoal-seller. Thus Saint Gregory the wonder-worker appeared as a benefactor to the city, uncovering the treasure which later became a splendid adornment of the church.**

When Saint Gregory was returning from that place, certain unbelieving Jews wished to mock him and show that he did not have in himself the Spirit of God. They did the following: On the road where the Saint was to go, the Jews placed one of their number naked and as if dead, and they themselves began to lament over him. When the wonder-worker was walking past them, they began to entreat him to show mercy to the dead man and cover his body with a garment. He took off his upper garment and, giving it to them, went farther. The Jews began joyously to ridicule and abuse the Saint, saying: "If he had the Spirit of God, he would have known that the man lying there was not dead, but alive;" and they began to call their companion to get up. But God rewarded them for their mockery, making their companion in very fact dead. Thinking that he had fallen asleep, they poked him in the side to awaken him, and they cried out loudly over him; but there was no reply, for he had fallen asleep in eternal sleep. Seeing him dead, they began to lament in very fact; and so their laughter was turned for them into lamentation, and the dead buried their dead one.

Farther on his journey, at a certain place in that land there was a pious assembly of the faithful under the open sky, and everyone was astonished at the instruction of Saint Gregory. But one boy began suddenly to cry out loudly that the hierarch was saying this not of himself.

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* Comana of Pontus, in the north of Asia Minor on the river Iris, in antiquity was a famous and wealthy city; it is now in ruins and is named Gumanek.

** Subsequently St. Alexander, bishop of Comana, was glorified for the sanctity of his life, completely justifying the hopes placed in him, and having well shepherded the flock of Christ, he sealed his worthy service by a martyr's death at the beginning of the fourth century during the persecution of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. His memory is celebrated by the Church on August 12th.

but that someone standing near him was pronouncing the words. When, after the gathering was dispersed, they brought the boy to him, the wonderworker said to those present that the boy was possessed by an evil spirit, and immediately, taking his omophorion and having breathed upon it with his mouth, he placed it on the boy. Then the youth began to writhe, shout, throw himself on the ground, and thrash about, as happens with the demon-possessed. The Saint placed his hand on him, and the attacks of the youth ceased: the demon left him and, coming back to his previous condition, the boy no longer said that he saw someone speaking next to Saint Gregory, and he was completely healed.

When, in the reign of the impious Decius (249-251), there began a persecution against the Christians and there came an imperial decree that compelled Christians everywhere to worship the idols and to be tortured and killed if they disobeyed – Saint Gregory advised his flock that everyone who did not have the strength and gift of God to endure fierce torments should hide himself, lest anyone, giving himself over boldly to the tortures, might later become afraid at the sight of the frightful tortures and, feeling himself unable to endure them, might fall away from God. "It is better," Saint Gregory said, "to hide for a short time and await God's call and help for the exploit of martyrdom." Giving the faithful such advice, he himself, taking one of his deacons, went into the desert and hid himself there from the unbelievers.

The torturers who were sent by the Emperor, coming to the city of Neo-Caesarea, first of all sought out Gregory as the representative of all the Christians and the pastor of the rational sheep in that land. One of the unbelievers, having found out that he was hiding in a certain mountain, informed the soldiers of this and brought them to that mountain; and they hastened to the mountain like dogs rushing upon their prey on a hunt, or like wolves who were about to seize a sheep. Saint Gregory, seeing that the soldiers were drawing near and that he could not flee and hide himself from them, lifted up his arms to heaven, entrusting himself to the defence of God; and his deacon he commanded to do the same. They both stood with their hands outstretched praying, while the soldiers diligently sought the Saint all over the mountain and did not find him, for they could not see him even when they passed close by him several times. After much searching they returned without success and, descending from the mountain, they told the one who had brought them: "We have

found no one on this mountain; we have only seen two trees standing not too far from each other.''

The man who had brought them, understanding that here there had been a miracle, left them and went himself to the mountain; finding the Saint with his deacon standing at prayer, he fell down to the feet of Gregory, expressing his desire to become a Christian – something he was indeed granted to do; and from a persecutor he became a slave of Christ and began to hide with the other Christians.

Once, when offering up his usual prayers to God, Saint Gregory was disturbed, and in fear for a long time he stood in silence, as if looking at a certain heart-touching spectacle. When some time had passed, he brightened in countenance and, being filled with joy, began with a loud voice to give thanks to God and to sing a hymn of victory, crying out: *Blessed is the Lord Who has not given me a prey to their teeth* (Ps. 123:6).

The deacon asked him: ''What has caused the change with you, father, that now you appear so joyful?''

The Saint replied: ''I have seen, child, a wondrous vision: a small youth has fought with the great devil and, having overcome him, has thrown him to the earth and triumphed.''

The deacon did not understand the significance of these words. Then the Saint again said: ''At this moment a certain Christian youth whose name is Troadius* was conducted to the judgment of the torturer, and after many terrible tortures for Christ was killed, and now in triumph is ascending to heaven. At first I was disturbed, for I feared that the torments would overcome him and that he would renounce Christ, but now I rejoice, seeing that he has finished the exploit of martyrdom and is ascending to heaven.''

The deacon, hearing this, was astonished that the Saint saw near what was occurring far away. Then he began to entreat his God-bearing teacher that he might allow him to look with his own eyes and find out what had occurred, and that he would not forbid him to be in that very place where this wondrous event had occurred. At the warning of Gregory that it was dangerous to go to murderers, the deacon replied with faith that despite this he was boldly resolved, hoping in the help of his pray-

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*** St. Troadius of Neo-Caesarea was martyred in the persecution of the Emperor Decius (250); his memory is celebrated on March 2nd.**

ers. "Entrust me to God," he said to the Saint, "and no fear of enemies will touch me."

And when Gregory by his prayer had sent down to him, as a kind of companion, the help of God, the deacon boldly set out on his journey, not hiding from anyone he met. Coming in the evening to the city and being exhausted from the journey, he considered it necessary to relieve his fatugue by washing in the public bath. In that place there dwelt a certain demon whose deadly power acted against those who approached the bath during the darkness of night and killed many, for which reason people did not go to this bath-house and did not make use of it after sunset.

Coming up to the bath-house the deacon asked the caretaker to open the door for him and allow him to wash in the bath; but the caretaker assured him that no one who dared to bathe at this hour emerged unharmed, but after sunset a demon took possession of everything here, and that many out of ignorance had already been subjected to incurable diseases, leaving with lamentations and tears instead of the expected relief. But the deacon yet more insisted on his intention, and the caretaker, yielding to his unbending desire, gave him the key and himself went far away from the bath-house. When the deacon, having undressed, entered the bath, the demon used against him various phantoms and terrors, showing all manner of specters in the form of fire and smoke, wild beasts and men. But the deacon, defending himself by the sign of the Cross and calling on the name of Christ, passed through the first compartment of the bath unharmed.

When he entered the inner part of the bath, he was surrounded by yet more frightful visions. But with the same weapon he also dispersed these terrors, both real and seeming. Finally, when he was already departing from the bath, the demon tried to detain him by violently locking the door. But with the help of the sign of the Cross, the door opened. Then the demon cried out to the deacon with a human voice that he should not consider his own the power by which he had been delivered from death, for he had been preserved unharmed by the voice of him who entrusted him to the keeping of God.

Being saved in this way, the deacon astonished the caretakers of that bath-house. After this he told them about everything that had happened to him and found out that the valiant struggles of the martyrs had been performed in the city precisely in the way that Saint Gregory the

wonderworker had declared in advance, and he returned to his instructor, leaving for the people both of his own time and of future times a general means of preservation, namely that everyone should entrust himself through priests to God.*

When the persecution ended, Saint Gregory returned to his see and, having gathered his flock, began again to install the good order that had been disturbed. First of all he established the celebration of the memory of the holy martyrs who had suffered during the persecution. The glory of Christ spread and demonic polytheism perished by the efforts of Saint Gregory, who did not leave off the preaching of the good news of Christ until his very death, bringing to God through his teaching and miracles the inhabitants of Neo-Caesarea and the surrounding area. He brought the city to the true faith, cleansed it from the sacrifices of idols, and sanctified it by the bloodless sacrifice.

In the sunset of his days, together with his brother Athenodorus, bishop of Pontus, he participated in the council against Paul of Samasata. Finally, having reached deep old age, he drew near to his blessed repose. At his repose he asked those standing by: "How many unbelievers are there still in Neo-Ceasarea?"

They replied to him: "Only seventeen keep to idol worship, but the whole city believes in Christ."

The Saint said: "When I came to Neo-Caesarea to be bishop, I found just that many Christians, seventeen in all, but the whole city belonged to the demons; but now, at my departure to God, there remain only as many unbelievers as there were believers at the beginning, and the whole city belongs to Christ."

Having said this, he gave over his soul into the hands of God.** So pleasingly to God did Saint Gregory the wonderworker of Neo-Caesarea spend his life, that he died in piety. By his holy prayers may the Lord grant us also to receive a good death. Amen.

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* Concerning this miracle Saint Gregory of Nyssa relates in detail in his life of Saint Gregory the wonderworker.

** The blessed death of St. Gregory of Neo-Caesarea occurred between 266 and 270. Not long before his death (in 264), together with his brother Athenodorus, bishop of Pontus, he was present at the council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata. Apart from the Symbol of faith, which was miraculously revealed, Saint Gregory of Neo-Caesarea wrote a "Canonical Epistle" on the occassion of the attack on Pontus and on all Asia Minor by the Boreans and Goths (for the text

A Miraculous Intercession

A Testimonial

Having read with much interest and spiritual happiness, the book *Blessed John*, I would like to add my personal testimonial of a miraculous occurrence of healing through the fervent prayers and intercession of Archbishop John.

In 1963 I was transferred by my employer from San Francisco to Portland, Oregon. And so, in March I moved to Oregon together with my wife, son and two daughters.

While in San Francisco, our family became quite close to the Church and Vladika John. Our son Vova (Vladimir) was an acolyte at the Cathedral;

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of this epistle see the Eerdmans "Seven Ecumenical Councils," p. 602). He also wrote an "Exposition of Ecclesiastes" and a "Panegyric on Origen" (a partial English translation of this may be seen in "A Treasury of Early Christianity," ed. by Anne Fremantle, Viking Press, New York, 1953, pp. 70-78). The relics of Saint Gregory the wonderworker originally were in the church of Neo-Caesarea erected by the Saint; the head of the Saint was translated in 1587 to Lisbon.

of Archbishop John Maximovitch

my wife wrote articles in the "Good Tidings"—a weekly, edited by Archbishop John; and I served on the Parish Council.

Soon after our arrival in Portland, my wife had major surgery which initially appeared successful. That night, however, while on IV, a serious infection developed and her condition became critical. Although Vladika was on a trip to Europe at this time, I nevertheless sent him a telegram on my wife's behalf.

The next day two miraculous things occurred: 1) We received a telegram acknowledging that Archbishop John was praying for my wife Tatiana, and 2) the infection abated and her condition greatly improved—with subsequent complete recovery.

Alexei Kochneff-Kennedy, Oct. 1981

Abbess Antonina

AND THE CAVE-DWELLERS IN THE CAUCASIAN MOUNTAINS

Then shall they begin to say
to the mountains, Fall on us;
and to the hills, Cover us.

Luke 23:30

The following is an eye-witness account of a true member of the Catacomb Church, Natalia V. Urusova, who herself endured a bloodless martyrdom in the years since the Revolution up to the end of the Second World War. Her crime was that she was a firmly believing Christian, belonged to an aristocratic family, was a monastically oriented "Josephite", and the mother of several martyred sons.

IN THE VLADIKAVKAS, not far from the railroad station was a convent dedicated to the holy icon of the Iviron Mother of God. I used to visit this monastery every day. I became very close to many nuns, but especially to the kind-hearted Matushka, Abbess Theophania. She was not highly educated and evidently came from a peasant family, but she was a wonderful humble soul.

It was early in the year 1922. One day I came to her and she said to me: "I want to share with you a secret, about which no one knows save for myself, the nun who is the treasurer, and my cell-attendant [a rassaphore nun]. Come, let us go."

Abbess Theophania conducted me through several rooms, and in the last one—from which a spiral staircase led to the attic—there was sitting another abbess. I instantly understood that she was an abbess because she was wearing a gold cross. She was unusually attractive, not only in her friendliness and spiritual loveliness, but in her rare outward beauty as well. She looked very young and one could never have guessed that she was already forty. For three months, despite the freezing cold of winter, they had been hiding her in the attic and only rarely would bring her down to this room so that she could get warm. The secret was well kept. Only the cell-attendant would ascend to the attic when she brought her food and other

Abbess Antonina

necessities. Soon I too became very close to her for we had much in common and we became quite attached to one another. She was well educated and from a good, noble family.

It was not long before she told me her story. She was the Abbess of a women's convent in the town of Kizliar in the Caucasus. In the beginning of the Revolution, when the plundering of monasteries was a common occurrence, a crowd of Bolshevik bandits broke into their convent destroying everything, robbing, and shooting to death several nuns who resisted. When for a short time the White Army took the town of Kizliar, somebody unknown indicated to them the persons who had destroyed the monastery and killed the nuns. The murderers were shot by the Whites. When the White Army retreated and the Bolsheviks took control of the town, they began to search for the person who had told the Whites. The Abbess, totally innocent, was accused and sentenced—an act of pure revenge. However, the Lord helped her to flee and at night she walked to Vladikavkas, to this convent where Abbess Theophania hid her. All over the whole of the Caucasus there were posted proclamations and "wanted" posters: "He who will show the whereabouts of the former Abbess of Kizliar Convent, Antonina, will receive a reward of 3,000 gold rubles."

For a whole month and a half I had the good fortune of seeing Abbess Antonina almost every day. Once, on a freezing cold night, when there was an unusual amount of snow, at one o'clock at night someone knocked at my window. Everyone woke up frightened. Who would knock at night except for the GPU? I lifted the curtain and couldn't believe my eyes. I saw Abbess Antonina in a white sheep-skin coat; on either side of her stood the nun-treasurer and the cell attendant Anfisa. "Hurry up, hurry up. Open and hide Matushka." They came in. We turned off the lights so as not to attract attention and what did we hear? We heard the following incredible, obvious miracle of God.

Just a few days before this, about which I had no idea, a certain young girl came to the convent, calling herself a daughter of the noble Troubetskoy family. With tears she begged the Abbess to receive her, stating that her father and mother had been killed and their estate robbed, and she remained alone in her grief. She played the part so well that she managed to gain the confidence of the Abbess who, in the simplicity of her heart, not only accepted and was very kind to the girl, but soon even confided to her the secret of Abbess Antonina. The girl disappeared at once—she was an agent of the GPU looking for Matushka Antonina. That same night the convent was surrounded by militia so that no one could escape. They broke in to search, demanding that the abbess be surrendered. When the cell-

attendant ran upstairs to inform Abbess Antonina about this, she said: "Well, what can we do? If it is pleasing to the Lord that they find me, let it be so. But if it is not His will, He will close people's eyes, and they, seeing will not see. Come, we shall go out in front of them." The nuns put the sheep-skin coat on her and the three of them went down the stairs and simply walked out of the convent gate before the very eyes of all the Red Army soldiers. They had not gone far when they heard the commander shout, "Who just went out of the gate? Who was led out?" The Red Army soldiers answered, "We didn't see anybody." "What do you mean," retorted the angry commander, "someone just left in a white sheep-skin coat accompanied by two nuns." Everyone denied it and only thought that the commander was imagining things. They searched everywhere, turned everything upside-down and were forced to leave empty-handed. A miracle!

And so she was brought to me. I, of course, was overjoyed that I could hide her, alhtough even in our place it was very risky for her, since we ourselves could be arrested at any time. I asked the nuns: "What shall I feed Matushka, for our meals are very poor?" The nuns answered, "We shall bring her meals twice a day, lunch and dinner." They sat with us until morning. Abbess Antonina remained with us and they returned to the monastery. Soon they brought the food, which they continued to do twice a day in the course of the two weeks she lived with us.

No one could help but love her. The children just adored her, and even my husband, usually indifferent to so many things, respected her and conversed with her with unfeigned pleasure. In those days it was still possible to acquire for a certain sum a secret shelter in the mountains from the local hill-folk, known as the Ingush. The convent wanted to do that, but such an enormous sum of money was demanded that even if all the possessions of the convent—what little remained after the Bolshevik plunder—could have been sold, even then it would not have sufficed. We decided that she would stay with us and did not make any plans for the immediate future, leaving her in God's hands, as we had all come to love her very much. She, however, suffered terribly at the thought that if she were discovered, then not only she would pay severely for it, but we also would be forced to suffer. Her whole case, of course, was a miracle and sheer Providence of God. After all, ever since that night of searching for her in the monastery, in spite of all the hideous designs of the GPU investigations, no one had detected where and why the nuns walked twice a day carrying hot dinners.

Two weeks went by. Meanwhile I put up a gauze curtain separating a place in a corner for her in the only room, where there were already five children. There was a bed for her and a hanging lampada brought from the monastery which was

always burning. Once I noticed that Matushka spent the whole night kneeling and fervently praying with tears. I could see through the thin curtain and I couldn't sleep; I could not help but be affected by her sorrow. Early in the morning she turned to me and said,

"Please do me a favor. Go to the Blessed Anastasia Andreyevna and, without saying anything else, tell her: Matushka Antonina is asking for your blessing."

Anastasia Andreyevna, a righteous fool-for-Christ's-sake, well known throughout all of the Vladikavkas region for her gift of clairvoyance, lived in a small hut located in the back yard of a good Christian. I went to her. She asked me what I needed and I told her that Matushka Antonina asked for her blessing.

"Yes, yes!" she answered. "Tell her that she should fear nothing; what she has decided and prayed about she should fulfill; yes, she should fulfill. She should go to the large red government house; yes, she should go!"

I told Abbess Antonina her answer and her face lit up...

"I decided to give myself up to the GPU today. I suffer terribly because you will have to answer for me, and even though I prayed, I still had fears and doubts about going through with this. But now, after the words of the blessed one, nothing and nobody can stop me."

The children and I burst into tears. What could we hope for? The GPU—why, this was an unutterable horror! She left, having parted with us in tears, but with an amazingly tranquil face which became even more glowing and more beautiful than before. She was in her monastic garb and wearing the gold cross of an abbess. In spite of all the hindrances and dangers, she never took off her monastic attire. A little more than an hour passed. We all sat in silence, given over to grief and the thought of her fate. All of a sudden my eleven year old daughter, looking out the window, cried out: "Matushka Antonina is coming!" She came in full of such extraordinary joy that it is impossible to describe. And this is what she told us:

"I came to the house of the GPU. The guard on duty asked why I had come. I answered that I would tell and give my name only to the chief. Others joined, demanding subordination to the rules and regulations and that I should register. I said, 'Tell the chief that I wish to see him and will not subordinate myself to anybody else.' They went and reported this to him. He ordered them to inform me that no one was allowed to violate the rules of admission. I again insisted that I would talk only to him. At this time the door opened into the corridor and the chief himself peered out. Seeing me he said, 'Come in.' So I entered. 'What do you want?' 'You are offering 3,000 rubles for my head. Well, I brought it to you

myself.' He was so dumbfounded that he got up and said, 'You, you are Abbess Antonina, and you came to us yourself?!!' I said yes, and that I had brought my own head. He took out my photograph from his desk. I took from my pocket one just like it. He looked at me and said, 'You are free, Go wherever you want'! As I was leaving he said, 'In a year's time, according to the law, I will be obliged to give you some punishment'...

No one investigated where she went after leaving the GPU and no one touched us. She settled openly in the convent where she lived peacefully for another year. Later I learned that she was ordered to work for a year as a maid in a communist hotel in the city of Rostov-on-the-Don. But even then she did not take off her monastic attire. Not a single communist, however, would demand service from her; all dealt with her without malice or insults; all paid her the utmost respect and would even slightly bow to her. In 1923 such things could still occur.

Some twelve years later, when I was in Kazakhstan in the city of Akhtyubinsk where I lived with my son who was exiled there, I met Archimandrite Arsenius who was also exiled there. He was a close friend of Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and through him I had the pleasure of meeting that holy hierarch. I found out that Father Arsenius knew well Abbess Antonina and he told me the following about her:

When her time of sentence was over, a group of twelve nuns formed a monastic community under her direction and went to the town of Tuapse with the aim of founding a secret skete high up in the mountains. In those days many monks from the ruthlessly destroyed monasteries hoped to settle in the mountains as hermits to avoid persecution from the Bolsheviks. But the minds of the GPU were sly; they placed their secret agents disguised as forest rangers all over the mountains, and one by one they discovered all the secret sketes and dwellings of these hermits—almost all of whom were shot on the spot.

When Abbess Antonina climbed up to the top of one high mountain, she met a monk from the skete where Father Arsenius was living. In that wind-swept, craggy wasteland, way up high and far removed from the world, she discovered a whole monastic settlement with caves and churches and enough provisions to live and serve God daily for some time. The monks there offered to help and at once set about digging out caves beneath the roots of huge trees, which became dwellings for the nuns. The monks lived in similar dwellings. They likewise constructed a church there and with joy helped the nuns in their needs. But this hidden community was not to last long.

Soon both sketes were discovered. Out of fourteen monks, only one, Father Arsenius who was the youngest, was spared and not shot as were the others; he was

exiled for eight years to a concentration camp far away in outermost Siberia, and upon completion of these eight years, he was sent to a settlement in Alma Ata. At this time Abbess Antonina was also arrested with all her nuns. She was not shot on the spot but exiled to an unknown place.

And this is all that Natalia V. Urusova tells about this holy abbess in her manuscript memoires. However, Protopresbyter Michael Polsky, publishing this material in his seconed volume of *The New Martyrs of Russia* (p. 248), adds to her story from his own experiences in the south of Russia (Vol. III, in manuscript, quoted below), giving a broader picture of the suffering Christians in the Caucasus and shedding light on the lives of martyrs hitherto unknown.

"In 1928, or in early 1929, a group of monk-ascetics was discovered in the Caucasus and executed by shooting. They were adherents to the teaching known as 'Name-worshippers,' originally expelled from Mt. Athos to the Crimea in about 1912. Their leader was Paul Dometich Grigorovich, a noble Kievan landowner who, after 20 years of monasticism, was drafted into the army where he held a high rank during the First World War. After the Revolution he returned to the Caucasus and was known as Father Panteleimon. The compiler of this book personally knew him as well as other 'name-worshippers' because in 1918, during the Civil War and the White Army movement in Kuban, a group of Orthodox missionaries conducted several conferences with the adherents of this teaching with the aim of bringing them back to unity with the Orthodox Church. They hoped to accomplish this by conducting doctrinal debates concerning the Name of God. I was one of these missionaries. A whole list of dogmatic resolutions was developed and signed by both sides. The former name-worshipping monk Methodius was lawfully ordained hieromonk for those who rejected the heresy, and sent to them into the mountains. But unfortunately a disagreement soon sprang up among them. Father Methodius remained loyal to Orthodoxy and left the mountains. On his way back, at one of the railroad stations, he was shot by the Bolsheviks. In ten years' time the rest of the desert-dwellers were also shot. They were described by the Bolshevik press as a dangerous, counter-revolutionary organization. In 1930 the writer of these lives himself wished to remain in Russia and live in the Caucasus, but having met the desert-dwellers and having learned more about their situation, he became convinced that to remain there would be impossible: all were kept under secret surveillance by the near-by village authorities." It is true that some went deep into the impenetrable thickets of the mountainous heights and for a long time no one knew their whereabouts. But the story of Abbess Antonina shows how an end was put even to these last desert-dwelling ascetics of the Caucasus.

MARTYRS OF NEW ATHOS

It must be mentioned that the greatest monastic attraction in this southern region was the famous monastery of St. Simon Canaanite the Apostle, better known as New Athos. In 1928 whatever remained of that veritable lavra of several hundred austere monks was destroyed. In the relatively short time of its existence, since the end of the 19th century, the monastery had acquired great renown and possessions; it was very well established and was an example to other monasteries throughout the whole Orthodox world. That year all the monastery property was stolen, everything was destroyed, and finally a group of 140 monks, who had managed to escape the first arrests by hiding in the mountains, was caught and taken to the Novocherkask prison on the Black Sea. The monks were interrogated, and upon their refusal to make a statement accepting the Soviet authority as beneficial to humanity, they were separated into groups and led to the torture chambers in the cellar of the NKVD building. There they were severely beaten and tortured. At night they were taken to a place in the Kosa region, seven miles outside the city of Novocherkask. They were lined up against a wall and shot. That wall was well known to all the inhabitants of the city.

All Orthodox Christians should remember these valiant servants of Christ who remained true to Him even unto a martyr's death.

HOLY DESERT-DWELLER MACARIUS

During the persecution of the Church and its clergy, in 1923 there came to the Caucasus a holy recluse. He appeared in the territory of Vladikavkas, in a deserted place 20 miles from a small railroad station by the name of Podgorny. He was from Central Russia but no one knows exactly where.

The territory where he chose to dwell was the foothills of the Caucasus. In a deep forest of gorges and cliffs, he dug a cave for himself where he lived and also had a small church. The altar table was hewn out of rock and there were a number of icons. It was all very poor and yet everything necessary for Divine Services was there. The recluse, Elder Makary, conducted services in this church. When the local people found out about him, they began to flock to him. There they would receive confession and Holy Communion, and the elder would also provide for their other spiritual needs. The number of his visitors constantly increased; within a short time he was receiving pilgrims almost every day.

Elder Makary was 65 years old, a genuine ascetic whom God glorified in answering his prayers and granting him the gift of clairvoyance: he would tell people their secret thoughts and deeds. The elder would always meet his visitors about two miles away from his cave and would then conduct them to his dwelling. No one forewarned him about their coming—he would discern it in his spirit. True pilgrimages began to take place, people coming from the vicinity of Kuban and local towns. The believers found there spiritual repose and they felt that they were cared for. After all, there were almost no churches left in the entire area and people were as sheep seeking shepherds.

Father Makary lived in seclusion until 1928. In this frightful year the Bolsheviks decided to put an end to his church. They had known about it for some time but for some reason had never reached it. At last they came and arrested the holy recluse. They wanted to take him away secretly, but the believers found out about his arrest and rushed to see him for the last time. As Father Makary was walking away under guard, he blessed the people on all sides and bid them his final farewell. This holy pastor of the persecuted Catacomb Church was finally martyred in the far north.

GOD-HIDDEN SAINTS

After the Second World War, there circulated in Russian emigre circles a brochure entitled, "Why I Also Believe in God." In it, the author, originally an atheist pilot, describes how he was commissioned to track down a group of monks and priests hiding way up high in the Caucasus. It must have been as late as the outbreak of the war. One day he spotted a ragged group of them on a high plateau. Upon seeing the plane, they began to run. The pilot clearly saw how they, apparently fleeing in the direction of their hiding place, were actually heading towards a wide chasm which separated them from the rest of that mountainous plateau. When they reached the abyss, they made the sign of the cross and, to the pilot's utter astonishment, they continued running in the air(!) until, having safely reached the other side, they disappeared from sight into the rocky cliffs. The dumbfounded pilot was instantly converted and came to believe in God Who had hidden his faithful slaves from the eyes of evil men but had allowed him to be a witness of this great miracle of Russia's Catacomb Saints for the salvation of his soul.

Sources: Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia*, Jordanville, NY, 1957, pp. 244-249 and Vol. III, manuscript; N. Urusova, manuscript.

Novice Basil (Archbishop Leonty), Archimandrite Theodosius, Abbot of Kiev Caves Lavra, later martyred in Soviet prisons, and the future Archbishop Hermogenes Golubev who recently died in banishment in Zhyrovisi Monastery; Kiev Caves Lavra, 1926

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